DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 405 126 PS 025 133

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TITLE	The Parent-Centered Early School: Highland Community School of Milwaukee.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-8153-2399-9
PUB DATE	Mar 97
NOTE	199p.; Studies in Education and Culture, Volume 10; Garland Reference Library of Social Science, Volume 1116.
AVAILABLE FROM	Garland Publishing, Inc., 717 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2500, New York, NY 10022-8101 ($45).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Books (010)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Curriculum Development; Educational Environment; Educational History; *Educational Quality; Elementary Education; Inner City; *Institutional Characteristics; Mastery Learning; Mixed Age Grouping; *Montessori Method; Parent Participation; Preschool Education; Private Schools; School Community Relationship; *School Effectiveness; Socioeconomic Influences
IDENTIFIERS	Diversity (Student); Historical Background; Montessori Schools; Wisconsin (Milwaukee)

ABSTRACT

Milwaukee's Highland Community school was opened in 1968 as an independent school (and is still funded mostly by donations) to provide a quality Montessori education and nurturing environment for economically and culturally diverse groups of families on the city's economically depressed Near West Side. Governed by a 9-member parent board of directors, the school serves about 70 students, ages two-and-a-half to ten. This book presents a case study of Highland School, detailing the organizational and attitudinal reasons that Highland works so well. Following an introduction noting research on characteristics of effective schools and the procedures used in the case study, the chapters of the book are: (1) "Highland the School," detailing the school's origins, neighborhood demographics, current program, and effectiveness; (2) "Cultural Diversity at Highland," outlining admission policies, five concerns for educating for cultural diversity, goals for multicultural education, and Highland's multicultural curriculum; (3) "The Meaning of Community at Highland," including the value placed on children, egalitarianism, nonviolence, and staff collegiality; (4) "Recent Research on Parent Involvement," including socioeconomic factors in parent involvement, the effects of parent involvement on student achievement, the effects of school intervention programs that promote parent involvement, and James Comer's Parent Involvement Model; (5) "How HIghland Involves its Parents," including three types of parental attitudes about school involvement and educating parents formally; (6) "Parents Govern Highland," describing recent experiments to reform decision making in U.S. schools, and a survey of the parent board members; (7) "The Trustees of Highland," on the history of Highland's Trustee group, the Trustee role, trustee attitudes, and the efficacy of a trustee board for an urban public school; (8) "Highland's 'Early School' Curriculum," detailing the 3- to 6-year-olds program and the Junior level program, how Highland

extends the Montessori Model, and how Highland compares to other current national reform experiments; and (9) "Highland's Lessons for Public Education," detailing the school's mission and values, organizational practices, and recommendations for public schools, such as stressing parent involvement, and organizing large schools into small, multiage units. Contains numerous references. (MTH)

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